Volume 1, Sept 2022

Booth Level Officer
E-Patrika

Message from

Rajiv Kumar,
Chief Election Commissioner of India

It gives me immense pleasure to introduce a new venture of ECI publication, 'BLO E- Patrika.' This is an ode to all the grassroot workers for their passionate service to build an empowered and inclusive democracy. The E-Patrika aims to recognize and appreciate the continued efforts of our BLOs to enhance the electoral roll and spread voter awareness.

The Indian election process is a colossal task which attracts eyeballs from around the globe. While, more often than not, the attention is directed onto the poll day, we rarely acknowledge the exhaustive task of reaching out to each household to enable the eligible citizens to reach the polling booth. This is not a one-day, one-man task. It is the work of a dedicated and well-prepared team that makes it possible. The BLO Patrika will give you a glimpse of how the team on the ground is trained and prepared to sow the seeds of Indian elections. It is a bird-sight view of the BLOs on the ground.

BLOs have a critical responsibility to facilitate voter registration, door to door survey for updating electoral roll & assistsance on the polling day. This E-Patrika will reinforce the BLOs with the nuances of voter awareness programmes and to sensitise them with modern day technologies & minimum SVEEP activities across the country.

The BLO Patrika is an attempt to bring across real stories from the ground. The storytelling format of the Patrika is sure to benefit its readers.

I extend my gratitude to the entire team who worked tirelessly to bring forth this one-of-a-kind Patrika in the finest way possible. Most humbly, I present this Patrika to all our grassroot workers who truly hold the reigns of the Election Commission of India.

(Rajiv Kumar)

Message from

Anup Chandra Pandey,
Election Commissioner of India

The importance of teamwork can best be seen from the mammoth task of conducting Indian elections. In its successful implementation, every stakeholder stands strong and shows the indomitable spirit which enables the Election Commission of India to conduct these elections in a free, fair, inclusive, participative and accessible manner, even during troubled times of COVID.

This exemplary team turns elections into a festival celebrated across the country. The BLO E-Patrika emphasizes on this teamwork and presents a detailed account of BLO stories in an attempt to connect with the Booth Level Officer who is like a bridge between ECI and the electors.

BLOs act as friend, philosopher and guide to the voters and facilitate them to participate in the electoral process. The BLO E-Patrika not only details the work done by the BLOs but also brings forth their experiences from the ground.

I feel extremely delighted to present the BLO E-Patrika dedicated to each BLO working relentlessly in ensuring that the biggest festival of our democracy is celebrated with true spirit.

I congratulate the entire team at ECI and CEO offices for capturing the glimpses of work carried out by BLOs at the ground level.

(Anup Chandra Pandey)

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NO VOTER TO BE LEFT BEHIND

Important Facts about

Booth Level Officer

- In 2006, the Election Commission introduced the concept of appointing Booth Level Officers (BLOs) for each polling station to ensure precision of the electoral rolls.
- Under Section 13B (2) of the Representation of The People Act, 1950, the BLOs are appointed from among government, semi government and local bodies officials
- The BLO is, in fact, a representative of the Election Commission of India at the grassroots level. He or she plays a pivotal role in the collection of actual field information, collection of registration forms from citizens and processing of roll revision corresponding to the polling area assigned to him.
- He/ she is a friend, philosopher and guide of the local people in matters relating to electoral roll.
- Under the overall supervision of the Electoral Registration Officer, the BLO is responsible for collection of information, field verification and identification of eligible voters, dead voters, and voters who no longer live in the current location.

A field day at work for the BLOs

BLO Milestone: 100% EPIC-AADHAAR Linkage

BLOs from several districts have accomplished the task of 100% EPIC-AADHAAR linkage
Here are two such examples;

State : Nagaland
District : Kohima
Name : Hiaroiliabe
Designation : Primary Teacher
School : GPS Heunambe
Polling St. : 7/58 Heunambe

State : Karnataka
District : Koppal
Name :- Eramma
Designation : Primary Teacher
Polling St. : 194-Govt. Pr. School

BLOs at work: Glimpses from the Ground

Pre-revision Activities

- Updating of BLO register
- House-to-house survey of voters
- Capturing photographs & coordination work at polling stations
- Collection of information about AMF at polling stations.
- Removal of repeated EPICs
- Removal of Demographically Similar Entries
- Removal of dead electors
- Removal of logical errors

Revision Activities

- Fill up Form 6, 7, 8 & so on
- Door to door survey
- Scrutinize electoral roll w.r.t. parameters like Gender Ratio, EP Ratio, Gap in young enrolment etc
- Mark PwD electors as defined by the Commission
- Coordination with BLAs of political parties.

Pre-poll Activities

- Distribution of Voter Information Slip (VIS) to the Electors by BLOs
- Preparation of List of Absentee/Shifted/Dead (ASD) voters
- Distribution of Voter's Guide
- Distribution of blank Form 12D & collection of filled Form 12D from senior citizen, PwDs & Covid patients

Polling-day Activities

- Help Desk/Voter Assistance Booth
- Over-view of the polling procedure

Four New Qualifying Dates for Voter Registration

Previously, new voters were enrolled if they turned 18 on or before January 1, which was the lone qualifying date in a year. Now, there will be four chances in a year to enroll due to an amendment made to Section 14(b) of the Representation of the People Act. The four qualifying dates are January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1.

New Voter Registration	Form- 6
Objections against proposed inclusion / deletion of Name	Form- 7
Shifting of Residence / Correction of Entries in existing ER / Replacement of EPIC / Marking of PwDs	Form- 8

Smart BLO

Facilitates voters with following ECI IT Apps

National Voters' Services Portal

NVSP (https://www.nvsp.in/) is a portal for citizen to avail electoral services. A user can avail and access various services such as apply for voter id card, apply online for inclusion of name, corrections in voter's card, search name in E-Roll, view details of Polling booth, Assembly constituency and Parliamentary constituency, and get the contact details of Booth Level officer, Electoral Registration Officer among other services.

Voter Portal

Similarly, to ease the process of form submission, 'Voter Portal' (https://voterportal.eci.gov.in/) provides a seamless interface for registration, alteration in entries, deletion, change of address etc. Upon logging into the portal, the citizen is now presented with an interactive interface suggesting selection of choice based upon his previous selection.

*Voter Helpline App (VHA) **

Citizen can avail and access various services such as apply for voter id card, apply online for corrections in voter's card, view details of Polling booth, Assembly Constituency and Parliamentary constituency, and get the contact details of Booth Level officer, Electoral Registration Officer among other services.The application is available on both Google Play & Apple Store.

*PwD App **

PwD app is meant for Person with Disabilities. The PwD elector can make requests for marking them as PWD, request for new registration, request for migration, request for correction in EPIC details, request for wheelchair. It utilises the Accessibility features of mobile phones for elector' shaving partial blindness and partial hearing disabilities. The Application is available on the Google Play Store and Apple App store.

Garuda App

A smart BLO uses Garuda App to capture and submit forms & other informations

GARUDA was rolled out pan India on 9th August, 2021.

Developed in-House by IT team of the Commission.

It is a dedicated Mobile App for BLOs to perform their tasks digitally.

Main functions of GARUDA App:

- Checklist/Field Verification of Forms
- Capturing information about AMF (Assured Minimum Facility) & EMF (Extended Minimum Facility)
- Capturing of GIS co-ordinates of Polling Stations
- Update Photos of Polling Stations
- Forms Submission
- Marking of Absentee, Shifted, Dead(ASD) Voters

* clickable links

Stories from ground zero

Breaking the Barriers

How BLOs blend welfare goals and electoral strategy to enroll maximum eligible citizens to vote

Sukru Majhi

77 AC Lanjigarh Village, Odisha

Prevalence of patriarchy can, at times, lead towards the isolation of women from public sphere. The story is of the town in Lanjigarh Tehsil in Kalahandi District of Odisha, dominated by local tribes.

Female voter registration was below the national average in 2020. It was noticed that illiteracy, household power dynamics and general unawareness presented females from participating in the electoral process.

The consistent effort of the BLOs like Sukru Majhi of Booth No 270 resulted in an increase of registration of woman voter percentage from 17% to 67% in that particular booth in the year 2022.

A team comprising BLO, AWW, ASHA, moved door to door & spread awareness about the registration process.

The BLO facilitated voters with the process of online registration by using Voter Helpline & Garuda App.

Contributed by:

Smt Sanghamitra Satpathy, Addl CEO, Odisha

Miningstar Sawkmie

30-Mairang Village, Meghalaya

The story of the Booth Level Officer, Miningstar Sawkmie under 30-Mairang village is inspiring and heart touching. The 52-year-old government lower primary school teacher from Mawsmai village, received open hostility from the public while trying to perform his designated duties and educating the citizens about the importance of elections.

Despite the odds, he traversed through thick forests and dilapidated kutcha road to reach his designated polling station and often has to take shelter beneath trees to protect himself from scorching sun. The residents detest him to the extent that during the door to door visit for enrolment and correction of EPIC, abuses were hurled at him.

Even with such a reception, he stayed true to his duty, and conducted the election exercise in the village with utmost sincerity. The enrolment figures of the village were mostly low, but the BLO kept on persuading all to enrol and helping those who were in need of EPIC. His perseverance has finally started bearing some fruits as many villagers, who used to be against him, have started to realize the power and utility of EPIC and have enrolled themselves. This alone has encouraged the BLO to proceed further with the objective to achieve 100% enrolment in the village.

Contributed by:

Sub-Divisional Officer (Election), I/C Mairang Civil Sub-Division, Mairang, Meghalaya

Baaton Baaton Mein

In Conversation with BLO

Siddharth Shanke

30 Fatorda Assembly Constituency, Goa

Hi, I am Siddharth Shanke, BLO of Part No. 23 of 30-Fatorda Assembly Constituency in Goa. My polling booth is St. Anne's School, East Wing, Agalli.

My first duty as a BLO was to verify the electoral roll. As a local, it was easy for me to go to different places. I initiated door-to-door visits and corrected/deleted names and addresses and enrolled new names in the voters' list. I have always received a warm welcome from electors and I try to offer complete support to them.

One day I visited a senior citizen who told me that it was difficult for him to travel more than 1.4 km just to cast his vote. He requested whether a polling station could be set up nearer to his house, a proposal I put before our Electoral Registration Officer. This request was granted, and the polling station was shifted to the current location, St. Anne's School, East Wing, Agalli. Subsequently, I sent WhatApp messages to all the voters in my area about the new polling booth address. After the polling booth moved to the new location, people were able to cast their votes. The good news is that the voting percentage, too, increased from 70 per cent to 80 per cent.

All voters in my assigned area know me well. Whenever they need any assistance relating to EPIC card, they send a message to me. They even visit me in person. The citizens in my constituency know that I can also assist them through the National Voter's Service Portal (NVSP) website (www.nvsp.in/voterhelpline), or the Garuda App.

Siddharth Shanke being awarded (R) for his good work

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
Election Commission of India

AADHAAR-EPIC Linkage

Another step towards reliable & robust electoral roll

Link your AADHAAR with EPIC by filling the New Form 6B

AADHAAR -EPIC linkage is Optional